**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the Abstract with the following rewritten Abstract:

~~The invention relates to a~~A method for phased separation of a sausage strand, ~~. The invention also relates to~~ a separating element for phased separation of a sausage strand, and ~~to~~ an assembly of a plurality of such separating elements. In the production of sausages it frequently occurs that a sausage strand must be divided into smaller segments, and the result of this division is achieved in controlled manner by ~~means of~~ the present invention.

Please replace paragraph [0005] with the following rewritten paragraph:

In yet another preferred application of the method, the sausage strand is locally constricted by at least partially displacing sausage dough locally from a casing. The casing (also referred to as "skin") is usually arranged to protect and shape the sausage dough. The presence of a casing simplifies the process of displacing the sausage dough; the casing increases control over the movement of the sausage dough. The sausage dough can here be displaced such that casing portions of the sausage strand on opposite sides can be brought into contact with each other during constricting of the sausage strand as according to processing step C). For an effective local displacement the pressing members can be provided with co-acting contact surfaces between which the sausage

strand is engaged. The choice and orientation of these contact surfaces can be freely determined. For further simplification and in order to obtain a "hard" synchronization of the operation of the pressing members and the cutting members of a separating element, in a preferred variant these are operated by a common drive. The pressing members can be displaceable in parallel planes or they can be displaceable in the same plane. In this latter case it is possible to displace the dough completely out of a casing along a certain length, for instance over a length of about 10 mm, or a length smaller than 15 mm.